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Ard Fheis - 1976 -77, Working for Peace, Planning for Pogress : Clár

Sinn Féin The Workers' Party

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Árd Fheis 1976/77



Sinn Féin
The Workers' Party

**WORKING
FOR PEACE
PLANNING
FOR PROGRESS**

Clár

POLITICAL

- 1 That this Ard Fheis rededicates the Sinn Fein Party to the political truths evolved by Irish republicans over long years of struggle and clearly formulated by Sinn Fein in the 1960's.;
 - (1) That imperialism is the enemy of all the Irish people and by controlling and exploiting the wealth and resources of Ireland impoverishes everybody.
 - (2) That its power and control affects the whole of this island and is not confined to the area controlled by British Troops.
 - (3) That the centre of imperialism has moved from Britain to the U.S.A. and that where British imperialism declined and lost control it was replaced by American Economic and cultural imperialism.
 - (4) That one of the consequences of Imperial control is the deep religious divisions carefully fostered and developed among our people by Britain and that the very cornerstone of Republican opposition to British imperialism is to end these divisions and unite all of the exploited against their common exploiter.
 - (5) That, while recognising that where imperialism is imposed by brute force the oppressed people are justified in opposing it by force, this Ard Fheis rejects the use of militarism and terrorism because, in the context of the artificial but very real divisions amongst Irish workers, the use of armed struggle not only deepens these divisions but inevitably diverts the mass struggle against imperialism into a factional struggle between Irish workers leading to further futile deaths and appalling injuries to our people.
 - (6) That the objective of the Republican and Socialist struggle is the reconquest of Ireland by her people. This means winning ownership and control of the wealth and resources and means of production, distribution and exchange. Without such a victory the withdrawal of foreign troops and their replacement by a native militia becomes almost meaningless, and would simply be a repetition of the southern Free State in the North.
- That this Ard Fheis therefore:
- (a) Re-emphasises once more its total opposition to the campaign of bombing and assassinations being carried out by different groups in the North.
 - (b) Condemns the naked and brutal oppression by the forces of British imperialism both British Army, U.D.R. and R.U.C.
 - (c) Calls for the building and strengthening of a real campaign for peace along the lines of the circular issued to all cumainn in August 1976 by the President in which working women and men could organise to get every form of repression off their backs.
 - (d) Declares that, since the strengthening of democratic reforms north and south is essential to enable workers to organise themselves for the severe struggle for jobs and living standards which lies ahead, the political or constitutional priorities at this time are the passing of a Bill of Rights in the North such as published by N.I.C.R.A. and the institution of democratic reforms in the south guaranteeing the civil liberties and freedoms which should exist in a secular pluralist society.
 - (e) Recognises the growth of reaction and elements of fascism in the southern state as a result of the abhorrence of the mass of the people with the foul deeds carried out by the Provisionals in the name of Irish republicanism, and determines to weld together and strengthen the broad Left opposition in Irish politics in order to give political leadership to Irish workers who have too long been deluded by false republicans and false socialists.
 - (f) Re-affirms the adherence of our party to democratic principles and to the need for expansion of democracy not only in political life but also in the economic and cultural life of society. In pursuit of our belief in the democratic process, this Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, instructs the Ard Comhairle to seek widespread endorsement of its

policies in the forthcoming general election in the 26 Counties and also in the local elections in the 6 Counties, confident that its clear and consistent policies over a long and difficult period are bearing fruit in the recognition by working men and women and small farmers that only one party, the Sinn Fein party, can lead them from the political and economic morass in which our country is slowly sinking.

Ard Comhairle.

- 2 This Ard Fheis recognises the demand for peace echoed throughout the Northern community as a revolutionary demand, in its own right.

We pledge support for peace realising that the various para-military campaigns are not in the interest of the Irish people, but, are along with British repression and continuing denial of basic human rights a solid obstacle to the social advance of the working class North and South.

Sinn Fein therefore pledges its total support for the Peace campaign of the organised working class through the Irish Congress of Trade Unions "Better Life for All Campaign".

Moreover, in so far as the various peace initiatives represent a democratic demand for an end to violence then these initiatives have the full support of Sinn Fein.

This Ard Fheis reiterates its support for the two basic democratic principles of our Northern policy essential to ending political terror and opening up a new era of progressive politics in N. Ireland:

(1) That all paramilitaries engaged in sectarian bombings and killings end immediately their counter-revolutionary activities and that the British Government ends its military repression and withdraws its troops to barracks pending their total withdrawal.

(2) The British Government dismantles all Repressive Legislation and institutions and introduces immediately an entrenched Bill of Rights to open up democratic options out of the present violent sectarian dead-lock.

Recognising that peace in N. Ireland has to be constructed by political initiative and that the British Government cannot shift the onus for creating peace onto the shoulders of the trade unions or the peace organisations.

Furthermore peace is not simply an absence of violence, peace is social and economic progress and if it is to mean anything it must mean tackling the causes of violence, not simply dealing with its physical manifestation.

Sinn Fein therefore pledges itself to campaign for a programme of social reconstruction in all local government areas of N. Ireland to form a positive working class counter to the housing, employment and poverty crisis developing in the North as a result of British Government policy.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 3 Recognising the contribution made by the Republican Clubs to the campaign for peace in the 6 Counties, particularly through the ICTU, "Better Life for All" campaign and the Clubs own anti-Sectarian Campaign, this Ard Fheis urges the Clubs to continue with their efforts to promote working class unity as the only viable long term basis for an end to the present sectarian violence and state repression.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin.

- 4 That this Ard Fheis put their full and active support behind the Trade Unions 'Better Life for All' campaign as a means of combatting sectarianism.

Jemmy Hope Cumann, Dublin.

5 That Sinn Fein supports the "Better Life For All" campaign of the N.I. Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions as the only viable broad based movement capable of making progress towards meaningful peace in the 6 Counties.

South Down/South Armagh
Comhairle Ceanntair.

6 That this Ard Fheis reaffirms our support for the "Better Life for All" campaign, and calls on the Trade Unions to redouble its efforts to activate its grass-roots membership.

Terence Perry/Liam McMillen,
Rep. Clubs, Lower Falls.

7 That while Sinn Fein supports the 'Better Life for All' campaign of the ICTU and the Peace Movement in their attempts to bring an end to sectarian violence and British Army repression we do not give support to all views expressed by the leadership of the Peace Movement on the question of the British Army and the RUC, and furthermore this Ard Fheis reaffirms that the withdrawal of the British Army from the streets, the reform of the RUC and the introduction of an effective Bill of Rights is the only basis for a lasting peace.

Wickiow Comhairle Ceanntair.

8 That this Ard Fheis reiterates that the demand for peace in the North is a revolutionary demand. While recognising the prime importance of the I.C.T.U. 'Better Life For All' campaign we support the efforts of all those genuinely working to bring about peace and to break down sectarian divisions.

North Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair.

9 The ending of all violence is essential to the development of progressive politics North or South. Recognising this basic political fact we support those groups genuinely working for peace and the breaking down of sectarian divisions.

Jackie Griffith Cumann, Dublin.

10 That this Ard Fheis re-iterates its demands for Peace, and welcomes all other organisations support for this demand.

Henry Joy McCracken Rep. Club.

11 Being aware of the Republican Clubs continuing campaign on policing, and in re-affirming past demands that the para-military R.U.C. be replaced by a civilian police-service, this Ard Fheis notes:

- (a) the torture cases in which members of the RUC were involved during 1976, for example the case of the 'Beechmount Three'.
- (b) that no independent complaints procedure exists to investigate alleged crimes of the R.U.C.
- (c) that R.U.C. crimes against members of the community are therefore frequently "covered up" by those members of the force authorised to investigate alleged crimes.

Sean South Republican Club.

- 12** In re-affirming our past demands for the urgent disbandment of the UDR, which continues to be a sectarian Loyalist grouping, this Ard Fheis particularly notes the number of U.D.R. men whose deep involvement in sectarian conspiracy and murder has been exposed in 1976.

Henry Joy McCracken Rep. Club.

- 13** This Ard Fheis totally rejects the concept of 'independence' currently being floated by both the SDLP and the Ulster Loyalist Central Co-ordinating Committee.

While welcoming any signs that loyalist paramilitaries are moving into a more political profile this Ard Fheis recognises that the political and economic implications of Ulster 'Independence' are contrary to the interests of the working-class in Ireland. We re-iterate that the only Independence this Party pledges itself to is the independence of the working-class under a 32 County Socialist Republic.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 14** In the furtherance of the anti-sectarian campaign we call on the Ard Comhairle and in particular the organisation in the North, to increase its efforts in contacting other political parties, on the issue of anti-sectarianism. In particular we would urge that through these contacts, posters be displayed in those areas where the Movement itself cannot operate.

Terence Perry/Liam McMillen,
Rep. Clubs, Lower Falls.

- 15** That Sinn Fein intensify, and take a more militant line of action on the anti-sectarian campaign; that this campaign be extended to the 32 Counties and involve the active participation of every member of the organisation.

South/Crawford Rep. Club.
Belfast.

- 16** This Ard Fheis calls for the establishment of a Political Committee to supervise and assist the preparations for the contesting of the forthcoming General Election and the continued supervision of the development of Sinn Fein as a relevant political party seriously interested in gaining support from the electorate in order to put our policies into operation.

Slieverua Cumann, Co. Kilkenny.

- 17** Recognising that the building of a broad progressive movement to counteract the forces of reaction, is an essential political task, this Ard Fheis urges the incoming Ard Comhairle to actively seek issues on which we can campaign with principled groups and individuals.

Jackie Griffith Cumann, Dublin.

- 18** That this Ard Fheis, in spite of Sinn Fein's continued opposition to the EEC, ask the Ard Comhairle to consider standing at the European elections.

Jemmy Hope Cumann, Dublin.

- 19** That Sinn Fein re-activate a campaign against membership of the E.E.C.

Divis Towers, Belfast

- 20 We call on the Ard Comhairle to reactivate the anti-EEC campaign, and this should be proceeded by a publication analysing the effects of EEC membership in Ireland up to the present time.

Terence Perry/Liam McMillen.
Rep. Clubs, Lower Falls.

- 21 That the incoming Ard Comhairle direct major national agitations on at least four national issues in the coming year (e.g. Agriculture, Fisheries, Housing, Sectarinaism, Land) involving the full participation of every member of the organisation. South/Crawford Rep. Club.
Belfast

INDUSTRY and THE ECONOMY

- 22 This Ard Fheis welcomes the Quigley Report in so far as it sets out three clear options for the development of the N.I. economy and is the first comprehensive review of the economic and industrial position of the economy in N. Ireland in recent times. Noting that none of these options involves the construction of Socialism, this Party nevertheless in order to protect the numerical strength of the Northern working class considers it necessary to make tactical decisions between these three capitalist options.

The submission from the Republican Clubs to the Secretary of State for N. Ireland on the Quigley Report to be made this month will observe the following guidelines:

As the Quigley Report states the options are either (a) a mixed economy with foreign capital investment, (b) dependence on British subsidy or (c) continuation of the present system based on the hope that the Northern private sector can, on its own reach full employment.

The interdependence of the N. Ireland economy on the economies of the U.K. and Southern Ireland demands a two front approach in determining the institutions and strategies of industrial development which express this relationship.

Option B of the Quigley Report — continuing British subsidy — must be translated into:

- (i) the expansion of direct State involvement in the manufacturing sector, in the way pioneered by the establishment of Strathern Audio Ltd. in West Belfast and
- (ii) the development of the British nationalised sector in N. Ireland.

Furthermore this second option must be combined with the first option by the development of the powers of the N.I. Development Agency in a manner similar to the Southern Industrial Development Authority.

Sinn Fein Party policy for the expansion of the N. Ireland industrial base is therefore a combination of integration into the development of the British nationalised sector with the development of the N.I. Development Agency to attract foreign capital and expertise in key areas such as plastics, chemicals and engineering that will later prove valuable in the construction of a socialist economy.

Parallel with this structural policy the Party calls on the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to seek:

- (i) the establishment and membership of a U.K. Department of Economic Planning — which would benefit both the British and Northern working class.
- (ii) the establishment of an industrial planning authority in the South on which it would also have representation.

Thus the Trade Union Movement in Britain, N. Ireland and the South would have access to the capitalist planning mechanisms of the three areas and would be bound together in the

solidarity of their struggle for expansion of the public sector in their respective areas, while at the same time increasing pressure on the British, Northern and Southern capitalist class to introduce systematic economic planning in all areas.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions is a body made up of Unions, both Irish and British based — this position has never been challenged by the progressive Movement in Ireland, which has always recognised a common interest between British and Irish workers.

The foundation of this strategy involves as a priority the elimination of sectarian and chauvanistic divisions among and between the working class in both Britain and Ireland.

The submission to the Quigley Report based on the protection of the interests of the Northern working class by demanding that through its Trade Union Movements it is represented on all economic planning bodies in Britain and Ireland, will thus lay down the material basis for working class understanding, solidarity and unity in these islands.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 23 This Ard Fheis recognises that the Local Enterprise Development Unit has failed to make any significant contribution to employment needs in N. Ireland.

That the Government should set up an employment body with terms of reference covering firms "employing less than 50 people" and "one man businesses" is a serious indictment of the British Government's attempts to tackle unemployment in N. Ireland.

This Ard Fheis calls for an inquiry into LEDU on the grounds that: the 'jobs' provided offer no security of employment; its terms of reference are relevant only to 18th century economics; it is diverting funds from more productive state industrial investment.

Ted Brady Club, Belfast.

- 24 This Ard Fheis calls for continuing support for the publicly-owned electronics enterprise, Strathern Audio Visual in West Belfast. Strathern Audio has the potential for expansion into other electronic products and this Ard Fheis condemns any attempt to restrict the development of this important experiment in Public Sector manufacturing industry.

Ted Brady Club, Belfast.

- 25 The supply of town gas in N. Ireland is today dominated by a dwindling number of local private companies and an expanding Calor Kosangas monopoly. Continued rescue attempts of the small local private enterprise firms has restricted the amalgamation and expansion of existing municipal gas companies.

This Ard Fheis supports the creation of a unified and publicly owned gas corporation in N. Ireland and its expansion into the manufacture and supply of industrial bottled gas throughout the Six Counties.

Ted Brady Club, Belfast.

- 26 That this Ard Fheis totally rejects the proposals of the Coalition Government, as outlined by the former Minister for Transport and Power, to supply Liquid Petroleum Gas from the Kinsale deposit to Calor-Kosangas and thereby allowing this privately owned monopoly of the bottled gas industry, the use of a natural resource to tighten their grip on the Irish gas consumers. Instead, we propose that the State, through Nitrigin Eireann Teo, set about the task of developing a state owned bottled gas company to cut out private profit on the sale of gas for domestic and industrial uses, and to guarantee the security of the workers presently employed in the industry.

Joé O'Connor Cumann. Dublin.

27 This Ard Fheis condemns the failure of the Government to establish a smelter to process ore from the Navan mine. We further condemn the export of vast quantities of valuable raw ore which would provide this country with badly needed valuable jobs. We believe that no excuse is acceptable in view of the chronic employment position and the chaotic condition of the economy and call for the immediate establishment of a State Smelter, which would be the greatest guarantee against pollution and give maximum benefit to the country. We call on the Government to seek the assistance of the United Nations Body, UNIDO, which provides expert advice on the development and construction of smelters on request to Governments of developing countries.

We further call for the publication of a White Paper outlining the full economic developments for Ireland, incorporating a smelter, processing and manufacturing industries to fully utilise our mining industry.

Slieverua Cumann, Co. Kilkenny.

28 This Ard Fheis calls for the establishment of a State meat company to develop the industrial processing of meat products to supply a steady supply of raw material, namely beef, to the industry and to protect the workers of the meat plants from the redundancies caused by the irresponsible destruction of the cattle herds by the sale of beef into intervention.

End to propose

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

29 This Ard Fheis call on the workforces of the State Companies to follow the example of CIE Unions in demanding the removal of private sector directors from the boards of State Companies and the extension of industrial democracy in these boards.

Get some examples

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

30 That this Ard Fheis commends Bord na Mona workers for their success in creating a surplus of over £1 million in the past year and condemns the banking system which grabbed that surplus in interest payments.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot

31 Certain areas of the economy in both the North and the South can be best developed on an all-Ireland plan. Private enterprise at present ignores the division of the country whenever it is possible to make additional profits by so doing.

Calor- Kosangas, Banking and the Meat Industry are possible the best known examples of such activity. The Irish Tin Box Company of Portadown (USA) supplies containers for the canning industry both North and South and Ferenka tyre-wire (Dutch) goes to Michelin tyres (USA) in the North.

The State Development agencies in both the North and the South should establish a joint economic development organisation to make a special study of the joint development of certain activities which naturally suggest the value of co-operation.

- (1) Energy;
- (2) Electricity;
- (3) The joint import of crude oil and the building on a joint basis of an all Ireland refining capacity capable of meeting our needs in this respect.
- (4) The development of an all Ireland gas industry;
- (5) The joint development of resources;
- (6) The joint development of supplies for the construction industry.

Ard Comhairle.

- 32** That this Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein (a) calls for amending legislation to ensure that the major oil companies are made subject to Irish Price control mechanisms and (b) that ways be sought to ensure they pay Irish tax on profits made in Ireland.

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas.

- 33(a)** That all branches of Sinn Fein endeavour to set up unemployment associations in their areas.

(b) That the Trade Union Movement in general take a more active stand in shaping Government policies.
Louth Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 34** That an explanation be given to this Ard Fheis as to why the campaign for the nationalisation of the banks lost its momentum particularly during the bank strike when a great opportunity existed.

Cumahn, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny

- Financial Proposals*
35 The Ard Fheis condemns the discrimination that allows special tax relief to working wives of commercial farmers while penalising the working wives of urban workers.

The Ard Fheis calls for the abolition of this discrimination and demands that taxation of workers should not be based on sex, marital status or social background.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin

- 36** That Sinn' Fein supports the I.D.A. as a potential structure to obtain full employment

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 37** That this Ard Fheis calls on the government to relax its restrictions on Eastern bloc countries setting up industries in Ireland.

Co. Monaghan Comhairle Ceanntar.

- Financial Proposals*
38 The Ard Fheis calls on An Taisce to exercise the same discretion as the Scottish National Trust who actively support major industrial projects, and condemns the campaign against the Schering Plough project; supports the stand taken by the Cork Trade Unions on the Ovens Project.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

- 39** That this Ard Fheis condemns local vested interest groups and their political allies of large farmers, businessmen and community councillors who are responsible for the loss of thousands of much needed jobs in the areas of Dublin and Clonmel, through their "successful" campaigns against the Oil Refinery and Scheering Plough Projects.

Joe O'Connor
Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

40 The Coalition government has, in the last twelve months, attacked civil liberties in a way almost unprecedented in the history of the State. Starting with Statutory Instrument Number 30, 1976 - an amendment to the 1947 Prison Rules - The Minister for Justice conferred on himself the right to prevent visits to prisoners by the legal advisors of their choice and by relatives, friends and concerned members of the public. Despite strenuous opposition from the Prisoners Rights Organisation, the Incorporated Law Society, members of An Seanad, trade unions and other organisations concerned with Civil Rights, the measure was adopted. Giving as an excuse for such draconian interference with the rights of prisoners, his suspicions that "two or three" lawyers were involved in malpractice during prison visits - suspicions that have not been translated into fact or charges in a court of law - the Minister legalised the drawing up of "blacklists" of both legal and other personnel on suspicion alone. There is no appeal from the Ministers decision and no provision for publication and adjudication of the charges.

This measure weighs against convicted prisoners and also unconvicted prisoners who are - in theory at least - innocent of any crime. It also weighs against those unable to find a bailsperson and the Minister has given notice that this section of the prison population will increase substantially in future as a result of the introduction of a referendum on the question of bail. Again relying on vague surmises and figures of 1973, the Minister claims that serious crimes are being committed by people while on bail. He has not given us up to date figures either on the number of persons convicted of crimes while out on bail or of the number of people, charged with an offence who were subsequently found not guilty and released. Such people would, if the referendum goes the way the Minister plans, spend a considerable amount of time in prison although innocent.

The Emergency Powers and Criminal Law Acts of 1976 were passed in the aftermath of the murder of the British Ambassador. It posed then as anti-terrorist legislation but nothing in its provisions confines it to terrorists or armed groups. It can, and in the light of historical precedent will, be used against any citizen or group of citizens incurring governmental or police displeasure. It can do the minimum amount of harm to an organisation working underground. Its main brunt will be felt by dissenting organisations working openly for change, including political organisations, trade unions, tenants associations, womens' right groups etc. This Sinn Fein Ard Fheis demands:

- (1) The implementation of new Prison Rules incorporating the provisions of a Charter of Prisoners Rights including that of free access to and choice of legal advisor.
- (2) The abolition of the Emergency Powers and Criminal Law Acts.
- (3) The maintenance of the present position regarding bail. Recognising that the only effective deterrent to crime is detection and fair trial and not preventative detention of potentially innocent persons.

Ard Comhairle.

41 Recognising:

- (1) That the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act has not once been used for the purpose it was allegedly introduced to the statute books;
- (2) That the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act has been used to blatantly suppress criticism of our prisons;
- (3) That the Special Powers conferred on the army and police by the recent Emergency Powers Act and Criminal Law Act has, and will lead to, abuses of the freedom and respect of the individual before the law:—

This Ard Fheis demands the immediate repeal of all repressive Acts of the Oireachtas. This

demand is made being particularly mindful that with the continued economic recession, high unemployment and low standard of living, the use of these laws will be directed more and more against those voicing legitimate criticism of the forces of law and order.

In particular we denounce the recent and callous declaration of intent of the bankrupt Government to withdraw a person's right to bail pending trial. We see this as just another of the many tactics employed by the present Government to divert attention from the real issues facing the people today.

In recognition of these facts the incoming Ard Fheis is directed to assess the need for the introduction of a Bill of Rights into the Southern Constitution. We finally call on all persons concerned with the daily erosion of our civil rights to become actively involved in exposing the real intentions of the Cosgrave administration.

Russell Cumann, Dublin.

42 A) This Ard Fheis —

Recognises (1) that 1976 was the year of the "political vacuum", during which a vicious circle of murderous violence was consolidated by various forces, thereby maintaining a state of communal terror, which effectively undermined the capacity of the working people to develop progressive politics.

Recognises (2) that overt violence currently derives from three main sources, namely (a) the British Army/UDR/RUC combine, (b) Loyalist assassins, and Provo killers.

Recognises (3) that current overt communal violence is founded upon chronic economic and political problems which, as an historic denial of basic civil rights by Imperialism, constitute a continuing act of violence against the Irish people. This being so, the building of meaningful peace must of necessity take these problems into account.

Recognises (4) that the development of the campaign for basic democratic rights can have a vital stabilising and radicalising effect on the entire community at this crucial time.

B) This Ard Fheis therefore:

Re-affirms (1) Past condemnation of the British Government for failing to yield to the necessity of granting democratic rights in the North as a vital factor in building meaningful peace.

Re-affirms (2) past commitment to the concept of mobilising the mass of the people in demanding democratic standards in the North.

Re-affirms (3) the belief that the NICRA is an important non-party political vehicle whose "Bill of Rights" programme encapsulates the significant democratic demands round which progressive elements in the community can be rallied.

C) This Ard Fheis therefore:

Calls for (1) the immediate repeal of all repressive legislation in the North and the urgent introduction of a firmly entrenched "Bill of Rights", guaranteeing basic civil liberties for all citizens.

Calls for (2) the withdrawal of the British Army to barracks pending ultimate withdrawal from the country.

Calls for (3) the creation of a community policy service which sees its role as serving the community, not repressing it.

Calls for (4) the unity of all working people for civil rights and against the sectarian killers, State-sponsored and otherwise, who are the common enemy of all our community

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

43 In congratulating the Republican Clubs Councillors on their important campaign against the Payment of Debt (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1971, this Ard Fheis is aware:

1. That the payment of Debt Act was originally introduced to deal with the anti-internment rent and rate strike by permitting the Stormont regime to withhold social security payments from those involved in that strike.
2. That internment as such is now (although internment powers still remain) and the anti-internment rent and rate strike has now ended, yet this vicious Act not only remains, but in fact is being extended.
3. That many of the families affected — (a) exist on meagre social security payments;(b) are not on any "civil disobedience campaign", but (c) have simply had to choose between adequate food and clothing and paying the rent.
4. That the penalties inflicted by this law are being endured by working people on both sides of the religious divide.
5. That the current operation of this act is not only a mean and vicious attack on the most deprived sector of the community, but furthermore is a grossly inefficient and money wasting endeavour.

This Ard Fheis therefore notes:

1. That the operation of this law is a vivid illustration of the extent to which easy reliance is placed on the "bulldozer" tactics of emergency legislation lawyers prominent in the field of social legislation have pointed out that the continued use of this emergency power is in itself an abuse of "law" in that the present use is totally outside the presumed original use of the Act.

This Ard Fheis therefore calls on:

1. The Republican Clubs throughout the North to work for the broadest unity against this Act, which has sinister implications for the future of social legislation in the Six Counties.
2. All working-class representatives to let their voices be heard in demanding immediate repeal of this child-starving charter.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

44 In re-affirming our condemnation of emergency laws in the North, this Ard Fheis is aware of:

- (a) the notorious role played by the reactionary Unionist political appointees who constitute the Northern judiciary.
- (b) the grossly cynical attitude of many professional lawyers who, while making an easy living from the unfortunate working-class victims of the present troubles, do not protest at the daily perversions of justice and denial of democratic rights which confront them in the courts.

Specifically this Ard Fheis refers to:

- (1) the blatant infringement of civil liberties inherent in the emergency laws under which the courts operate.
- (2) the politically directed practice by which judges impose heavier prison sentences to compensate for the longer sentence remission, (half-term), now available since the abolition of Special Category status in N.I. prisons.
- (3) The current practice of the judiciary in permitting the continuing remand in custody, (up to 12 months in some cases), of individuals against whom evidence is scanty, and who are either released for lack of evidence after serving an unofficial sentence on remand or are convicted on false evidence obtained under physical and mental duress.
- (4) the disparity between sentences imposed on members of the so-called "Security Forces"

(in the few cases where they have been charged and found guilty), and the sentences imposed on ordinary working-people who appear before the courts.

- (5) the subtle fostering by the judiciary of sectarian feeling in the community by an obvious disparity of sentences imposed on individuals from different religious-political backgrounds.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

45 This Ard Fheis believes:

- (a) that the development of a Community Law Centre in Belfast is a progressive step in the struggle for people's rights.
(b) that the Republican Clubs should be active in urging the further development of these centres throughout the North.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

46 In re-affirming its general demand for the abolition of all repressive laws in the North, this Ard Fheis is particularly aware of the fact that the 7-day detention power contained in the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976, is being blatantly used in the North as a cover for the ill-treatment and torture of prisoners.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

47 This Ard Fheis is aware of the findings of the European Commission on Human Rights at Strasbourg with regard to the torture of detainees in N.Ireland, and demands that those employees of the British Government who are guilty of torture be brought to trial, identified publicly and punished suitably.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

48 That this Ard Fheis welcomes the coming together of the N.C.C.L., the I.C.C.L. and N.I.C.R.A. in opposition to the increased level of repressive legislation in Europe.

James Connolly Rep. Club,
New Lodge Rd. Belfast.

49 That Sinn Fein, recognising the importance of a national campaign for the abolition of existing legislation against contraception, actively supports the I.C.A.P. in its demand for the provision of a complete Family Planning Service to all who need it.

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntair.

AGRICULTURE and LAND

50 That Sinn Fein treat land as a natural resource and therefore:

- (1) That it insists that it be used to the maximum benefit for the feeding of the urban population.
- (2) That it be used to generate the maximum amount of employment in agricultural based industries.
- (3) That steps be taken to ensure that a regular supply of agricultural produce be generated to replace the present anarchic supply which results in seasonal unemployment for thousands of workers.
- (4) That proper recognition be given to those industries which maintain agricultural production e.g. farm machinery, fertilisers and chemicals.

To ensure the above Sinn Fein demands the expansion of Comhlacht Siuicre Eireann and Erin Foods in the area of production, processing and distribution of food etc.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

51 This Ard Fheis calls for the setting up of a State food industry under the control of the Irish Sugar Co. to ensure that cheap food is available to the growing urban population during the period of the industrial expansion planned by our Party.

In particular, the Irish Sugar Co. would be empowered to take over tillage land coming on to the market, intervene to restructure land ownership and generally, by a tillage policy, substitute grain, fruit and vegetable home production for the vast quantities now imported in order to maintain the ranchers inflated production of beef for export markets. In general the Ard Fheis calls on the government to substitute a compulsory tillage policy for its present policy of supporting live cattle exporters.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

52 That, the Movement should make it part of their policy to compel farmers to till a minimum of 20% to 25% of their arable acreage in vegetables taking into account the amount of vegetables imported and the cost of same to the housewife.

Tralee, Co. Kerry.

53 Ireland has 768,000 acres of forest which gives employment to 8,000 people. Forest is regarded as the last use for land; every other use is first considered. The approach to forestry has been to buy and plant derelict agricultural land.

Employment in forestry is at present mainly of the unskilled and the semi-skilled type. For every person employed in forestry it is estimated that three other jobs are created as a result; they are in transport, in extraction, processing and service industries dependant on timber.

Only 3.75% of the total area of the country is under forest; many west European countries have over 20% of their area under forest.

In 1974 timber was equal to 6.7% of our total imports; it accounts in large measure for the 20% of its raw materials which the construction industry imports. Production from 45% of the best forest land in Co. Leitrim would replace all the raw material involved in our softwood imports.

We call for the extension and development of the national forest under State control and ownership.

Ard Comhairle.

- 54 While recognising the importance of forestry to the economy, that Sinn Fein calls on the Forestry Department to pay the market price for land acquired. And not to plant arable or good grazing land where other land is available and suitable.

Co. Monaghan Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 55 This Ard Fheis condemns the attempt being made by the IFA to force Bord na Mona to hand over its cutaway bogs to private farmers and support the Bord in its successful experiments to grow vegetables on their bogs.

Martin O'Leary, Cumann, Dublin.

- 56 That Sinn Fein rejects the proposed change in the law governing the sale of land to non-nationals. This change will open Ireland to the ravages of all international property-speculators and land grabbers and will be another step in the conquest of Ireland by the cheque book brigade of the E.E.C.

Galway City Cumann.

- 57 That a purchase tax be levied on all professional people, business people, industrialists and non-nationals or their wives to the equivalent of twice the purchase price of the agricultural land they buy.

That double taxation be imposed on all the above people holding land presently.

Co. Monaghan Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 58 That following the failure of successive governments to tax the farmers, Sinn Fein The Workers' Party calls for the immediate taxation of farmers on an equitable basis.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

- 59 The Ard Fheis condemns the 'notional' system of taxing farmers as being merely notional. It calls for a progressive taxation system based on the keeping of proper accounts as every other industry.

To ensure that there is no evasion, the Ard Fheis calls for the expansion of the Revenue Commission and the setting up of a special division to implement the taxation of farmers.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

- 60 That farmers be taxed the same as every other worker in the country.

Tralee, Co. Kerry

- 61 That Sinn Fein appoint a spokesman on Agriculture and Fisheries. Much of the research and predictions of Sinn Fein is not being used to the furtherance of the organisation due to this lack.

Co. Monaghan Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 62 That the Movement set up a separate research department dealing specifically on Agriculture to promote discussion in the Movement.

James Connolly Cumann, Bray.

- 63 The Ard Fheis notes the Foras Forbatha report that the worst polluters of rivers and lakes are not industrial plants but the fertilisers and slurry of IFA "commercial farming".

It calls on the media to show the same interest in this massive pollution as it does in scare stories about Dublin Bay refinery pollution; Asahi; and the Ovens asbestos project.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

*Don't speak out
Speak on 28.*

FISHERIES

- 64 Fishing means a lot more to the Irish economy than the chance catching of fish from an Irish boat. It is quite obvious that a good market for fish existed all over the continent of Europe.

The present government and opposition are trying to focus all discussion of the Irish fishing industry on efforts to secure larger exclusive areas of sea for Irish fishermen. The government has not attempted to discuss the export of Irish processed fish to the large market for fish which exists in Eastern Europe as well as in Western Europe.

The Irish fishing industry must be developed on the basis of 'fishing ports'. These ports should be provided with road and rail links and plentiful supplies of electricity and water. A fish processing industry must be developed by BIM based on the fishing ports.

Sinn Fein supports a 200 mile fishing limit under Irish State control. Sinn Fein welcomes the efforts now being made to bring trade union organisation into the fishing industry.

O'Leary Cumann, Dublin.

- 65 That this Ard Fheis demands the immediate extension of our fishing limit to 200 miles, excluding all other countries including other EEC members and that the lives of our fishermen be protected by safer vessels and an up to date charted coast.

Jemmy Hope Cumann, Dublin.

- 66 That recognising the potential of our fishery resources as the basis for a viable native fishing industry, Sinn Fein, without in any way diluting or retracting our demand for a 200 mile fishing limit, support the present campaign and agitation for an exclusive 50 miles fishing zone, backed up by an adequate fishery protection service.

Galway Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 67 That this Ard Fheis reaffirms its support for the fishermen's struggle to secure the fishing grounds of Ireland for their exclusive use and that the Republican Movement support and be seen to support, this cause with increased vigour.

Cumann, Dundalk,

- 68 Recognising that the conservation of Irish fisheries is pointless if the ability to catch the fish stocks in our waters is not within the capacity of the Irish private fishery industry and recognising that this failure is accepted by the fishing industry, this Ard Fheis calls for the expansion of a State fishing fleet in the large trawler class as part of an integrated fish processing industry, the fleet and the industrial plants to be in the control of Bord Iascaigh Mhara.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

- 69 That this Ard Fheis calls for the reorganisation of Bord Iascaigh Mhara as a state fishing company and the building up of a state fishing fleet. Sinn Fein further calls for full training facilities for fishermen, development of our harbours with adequate back-up facilities and the development of sea-fish farming.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar

- 70 That this Ard Fheis welcomes the recent unionisation of the fishing industry and condemns those members of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation who are attempting to obstruct the trade union organisation as was seen in their locking out of unionised fishermen in Skerries.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin.

- 71 The Ard Fheis commends the ESB for its work in stocking and conserving rivers and lakes under its control.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

- 72 That Sinn Fein develop a comprehensive maritime policy with a particular view to increasing the capacity of our harbours and the development of a State mercantile fleet.

James Connolly Cumann, Bray.

EDUCATION

- 73 Sinn Fein recognises the trend in education, as in other walks of life, that while the taxpayer foots the bill control on decision-making power is handed over to private individuals.

This situation is evident right throughout the entire spectrum of education.

At primary level, the State pays all, yet the Church totally controls; despite the facade of Boards of Management at second level, the State pays for Convents and Clergy dominated schools but yet are excluded from management.

At 3rd level the situation has recently taken a bad turn for the worse. Here the State pays all the capital expenditure and most of the running costs — about 15% being contributed by student fees. Up to now a certain unifying influence on policy making was held in the University sector by the N.U.I. and in the Technological sector by the N.C.E.A.. However the N.C.E.A. has been emasculated by Government decree and the N.U.I. is being broken up, so that different academics can have their paper empires in their own exclusive ivory towers.

Sinn Fein, therefore demands that control of education be taken out of the hands of a self-interested and socially irresponsible academic elite; and sees that if society pays for education then the structure must be constructed whereby society can control education.

U.C.G. Rep. Club.

- 74 Sinn Fein recognises that the vast upsurge in the number of young people in the schoolgoing bracket, coupled with the zero growth rate in Capital expenditure on Education has led to serious overcrowdings in classrooms and a disastrous staff-student ratio.

This fact coupled with the many social problems of children in poorer areas often leads to major educational difficulties, i.e. slow-learners, functional illiteracy etc., which the ordinary teacher cannot solve nor indeed should be asked to solve.

Therefore Sinn Fein, redoubles its call for greatly increased capital spending on Education and also calls for the development of a comprehensive system of remedial teaching.

Sinn Fein calls for the provision of adequate training facilities for remedial teachers; for the development of an adequate and comprehensive policy on the role of such teachers and the provision of adequate finance to implement this policy.

Sinn Fein makes this demand because it recognises that in Education, as in all other areas of life, the State must make special provision for those, who through no fault of their own, are at a disadvantage to the rest of society.

Rep. Clubs, U.C. Galway.

- 75 While reaffirming our commitment to the secularisation of our educational system, Sinn Fein also supports the demands being made for multi-denominational schools in the 26 Counties.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Rathfarnham.

- 76 That the Ard Comhairle clarify our policy of democratic control of our schools. In that context we reject the institution of the Management Committees of our primary level National schools as being simply a newer form of Church control in our National schools.

James Connolly Cumann, Bray.

- 77 That the Republican Movement reaffirms its commitment to equality of educational opportunity, and to achieve this end believe that comprehensive integrated education must become a reality both North and South.

We propose that the Republican Clubs make a submission to the Cowan inquiry and the submission should contain the following points:—

- (a) that grammar schools be abolished.
- (b) that no selection whatever takes place at the age of 11.
- (c) that comprehensive neighbourhood schools be developed to cater for two or more primary schools with the age range of 11 to 16.
- (d) that Sixth Form Colleges offering a broad range of academic and technical subjects be established.
- (e) that such schools must be co-educational, religiously integrated and be controlled by representatives of the Department of Education, teachers and parents.

South Antrim Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 78 (a) That Sinn Fein declares its commitment to achieving a fully integrated, comprehensive system of Education in Ireland and welcomes the Cowan report on Education in the Six Counties as a step forward in this direction.
- (b) That the incoming Ard Comhairle should, as a matter of urgency produce a policy designed to meet the immediate practical problems facing Education in the Six Counties.

Co. Derry Executive of Republican Clubs.

- 79 Under Section "Education", p. 13 of "Party Programme", subsection (k); add further: It should foster respect, based on understanding of the diverse cultural traditions within the nation and through the teaching of geography and world history foster a sense of international solidarity with other peoples of the world struggling for independence and socialism.

James Connolly Cumann, Bray.

- 80 Under Section "Education", p.13 of "Party Programme", subsection (g); Add "The longterm aim should be an integrated third level system where all socially useful skills, theoretical and practical can be developed on a basis of mutual respect recognising and benefiting from the inter-disciplinary contact at present stunted by compartmentalisation."

Wicklow Comhairle Ceanntair.

- 81 Under Section "Education", p.13 of "Party Programme", subsection (m); omit last sentence and replace by "That Irish history be taught so as to reveal the historic role of classes struggling for emancipation in all aspects of life."

James Connolly Cumann, Bray.

NAME of PARTY

- 82 That this Ard Fheis add "The Workers' Party" as a descriptive amendment to the name Sinn Fein.
Ard Comhairle.
- 83 That in future the organisation be known as Sinn Fein The Workers' Party.
South Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.
- 84 That this organisation now be known as Sinn Fein - the Workers' Party.
North Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair
- 85 This Ard Fheis welcomes the use of the addition to the Party's name of "The Workers' Party" in recent publications and calls for the formal adoption of this addendum to Sinn Fein and the Republican Clubs.
Burns/Bracken, Rep. Club, Belfast.
- 86 That "The Workers' Party" be in future an addition to the name Republican Clubs.
James Connolly Rep. Club.
New Lodge Rd. Belfast.
- 87 That this cumann supports the decision to change the name of the party to Sinn Fein — the Workers' Party.
Russell Cumann, Dublin.
- 88 That this Ard Fheis welcomes the decision of the Ard Comhairle to adopt the name Sinn Fein The Workers' Party and notes that this is not an honorary title but a name earned in the service of the working class.
Pearse Cumann, Dublin. —
- 89 This Ard Fheis fully supports the addition to the Party name of "The Workers' Party".
South/Crawford Rep. Club.
Belfast.
- 90 This Ard Fheis welcomes the addendum to the Party's name of "The Workers' Party."
Ted Brady Club, Belfast
- 91 This Ard Fheis welcomes the addition of "The Workers' Party" to the Party names, Sinn Fein and Republican Clubs, as a true expression of the dominant strength of the industrial working class, North and South.
Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.
- 92 This Ard Fheis, noting that by 1986 there will be nearly 1½ million in the labour force, welcomes the addition of "Workers' Party" to our title, thus stressing our claim to leadership of this large workforce in the political and economic field.
Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.
- 93 That the term "Workers' Party" be continued to be used as a sub-title and be projected as often as possible.
Cumann Ashe/Kavanagh, Cork City.

- 94 We propose that the question of the name of the organisation be referred to the incoming Ard Comhairle for discussion. Wolfe Tone Rep. Club. Belfast.

- 95 That the incoming Ard Comhairle be instructed to take out an injunction restraining the media from referring to the Provisional Alliance as "Sinn Fein".

Mitchel Cumann, Ringsend.

HOUSING and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 96 The results of the Housing Report published by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in October 1976 showed that in many areas the inadequacies of the housing supply are of crisis proportions. On the North, 25% of all households live in dwellings in need of either improvement by the provision of basic amenities, or of replacement by new dwellings.

Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh in particular, suffer from overcrowding due to a shortage of houses (26% of households in this area are overcrowded), while the same area has the highest percentage of its houses lacking in amenities and in need of extensive repair.

Private enterprise has proved to have no interest in tackling the problem. Private landlords take advantage of the housing shortage by extorting high rents for overcrowded and sub-standard flats in an area where 42% of all households are living below the poverty line set by the Government as subsistence level.

This area West of the Bann, is therefore dependant on the building programme of the NIHE to solve the housing problem. Any cut-back in the house-building programme would result in increasingly rapid deterioration.

- (1) This Ard Fheis records the opposition of the Republican Movement to any such cut-back;
- (2) The Republican Movement calls for guarantees from the Secretary of State for the Environment that the current policy of neglect of the area cease, that the necessary resources be made available to bring the housing standard up to a level whereby sufficient accommodation with proper amenities and at a reasonable rent be made available to people, to live in the area of their choice.

George Plant Rep. Club. Omagh.

- 97 This Ard Fheis welcome the publication of the N.I. Housing Executive Household Survey, 1975, and on the basis of its findings demands immediate Government action to tackle, at source, the root causes of the drastic levels of poverty, bad housing and lack of employment that the Report reveals.

We view with alarm the decision of the Department of Environment to end rent control in the Private Rented Sector and their apparent change in policy to regard the refurbishing of old houses a greater priority to the building of new houses.

We believe that the housing crisis in N. Ireland will not be solved by tinkering about with the various aspects of the problem. We demand the implementation of a radical housing strategy based on a programme which must include:

1. The building of 400,000 new houses in the next 20 years, to meet demand.
2. The complete take over by the Housing Executive of all private sector rented accommodation and the initiation of major rehabilitation projects to bring these houses up to standard.
3. Vastly increased progress on current redevelopment sites and slum clearance.

We reiterate our demand for the establishment of a State Sponsored Building Industry to

be responsible for all public sector building, with particular emphasis on increasing new public housing output, redevelopment and refurbishing programmes.

Finally, since we believe that the whole crisis in housing is centred in the field of housing finance, we reaffirm our demand for the imposition of an immediate rent freeze and the launching of a Public Inquiry into all aspects of Housing Finance.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 98 Housing needs in Ireland today demands the construction of one million new homes during the next 20 years.

The Irish construction industry with its private enterprise base is incapable of meeting this demand. In re-affirming the call for public ownership of the construction industry this Ard Fheis advocates the establishment of an industrialised house building sector using systems based on both timber components and large concrete prefabricates.

Ted Brady Club, Belfast.

- 99 We propose that the Republican Movement should explore channels to pressurise Westminster into clearing the debts of the Housing Ex. i.e. debts accrued from the old Housing Trust, dubious builders, vandalism etc. Thus enabling the construction of more housing projects with ample facilities and amenities and of course preventing further increases in rent.

Rep. Club. Twinbrook Est. Co. Antrim.

- 100 This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein pledges its continued support to the National Association of Tenants Organisation.

Ard Comhairle.

- 101 This Ard Fheis supports the N.A.T.O. organisation and encourages all Sinn Fein members to support the expansion and development of that organisation throughout the country.

Limerick City Cumann.

- 102 That this Ard Fheis calls for an enquiry into N.B.A. scandals throughout the country and especially the one in Cork and it reiterates Sinn Fein's demand for the establishment of a state construction company.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 103 That this Ard Fheis instructs the incoming Economic-Housing Department to investigate the National Differential Rent Scheme with a view to formulating a more equitable scheme.

Waterford City Cumann.

- 104 That this Ard Fheis deplores the decision of the Coalition government to withdraw funds for housing from local authorities and the subsequent heavy increase in rates both in Dublin and throughout the country.

The present rating system of raising local finance is outmoded and causes considerable hardship to ordinary householders.

We call on the incoming Ard Comhairle to prepare a detailed revue of local government finances and how the burden can be more equitably shared.

Bearing in mind that the increases in rates affects not only householders but the majority of working people living in rented public authority dwellings and that their rents will be up-graded without consultation with the occupants, we call on NATO to intensify their efforts for rates reform and control.

North Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair.

- 105 We condemn the eviction of families from local authority housing as anti-social and wasteful of resources. We urge as an alternative (1) a more speedy reallocation of vacant accommodation; (2) that vacant, privately owned habitable accommodation be taken in charge by local authorities for allocation to the homeless; (3) That a proportion of each housing estate of the semi-detached variety be bought by local authorities and set in 2 flats to newly-weds or families with one child.

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas.

- 106 That a State board be established with powers to ensure that local authorities initiate schemes for the settlement of the "Travelling People".

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas.

- 107 That the provision of piped water to all farms and rural dwellings be a priority item on Sinn Féin's election manifesto.

Co. Monaghan Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 108 That this Ard Fheis emphasises the Sinn Féin policy of total abolition of ground rents with any compensation due payable to the victims of the ground-rent system over the years, i.e. the householders.

That the Sinn Féin campaign against ground rent which commenced in 1965 with the Midleton dispute and continued with growing success during the Proby Estate dispute in 1968 be escalated. Sinn Féin supports the campaign aims of the Association of Combined Residents Associations in their campaign against ground rent, commends the courageous example of many Sinn Féin members who have played a leading role in the ground rent strike and points out that neither Fianna Fail or the Coalition parties intend to abolish existing ground rents.

North Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair.

- 109 Recognising that the Ground Rents Legislation which the Government has promised to introduce in the Dail, is likely to prohibit only the creation of new Ground Rents. Sinn Féin reaffirms its opposition to the principle of Ground Rents and pledges itself to continue to work for the total abolition of Ground Rent in all its forms.

Ann Devlin Cumann, Rathfarnham.

- 110 That this Ard Fheis, (a) reaffirms the Party's long-standing policy for the total abolition of Ground Rents; and (b) That we consider the proposed Coalition legislation on this matter as inadequate as it does not meet the people's demands, expressed through the present ACRA Ground-Rent campaign.

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas.

- 111 That this Ard Fheis of Sinn Féin considers the present system of levying rates, without reference to equity or ability to pay, is unjust and should be abolished. That the incoming Ard Comhairle explore alternative local taxation systems and also the possibility of reforming the existing system, with a view to having a comprehensive policy on this issue ready for the coming General Election.

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas.

HEALTH and SOCIAL WELFARE

- 112** Recognising that the State, in the Constitution, guarantees to cherish all the children of the nation equally, Sinn Fein deplores the cut-backs in the Health Services, especially in the more peripheral areas, such as care of the old and infirm, care of the mentally and physically handicapped etc.

Sinn Fein sees that charitable organisations have played a substantial role, both in providing care and initiating discussion in many of these areas. However, we deplore the trend whereby the State continues to refuse to shoulder its responsibilities, and instead shifts the burden onto private organisations. We also do not accept the claim that only small, non-centralised institutions can deal with the many problems in this area.

In the area of charitable organisations we recognise and deplore three main aspects:

- (1) Charities, by their nature, are self-perpetuating. That is to say that because these organisations try to patch up the wrongs of society, without agitating for State intervention, they can at most, only alleviate immediate distress, and never the underlying malady or injustice.
- (2) Many charities prostitute the sick and infirm as fund raising gimmicks. It is disgusting and degrading for e.g., a wheelchair victim to have to sit in a public place all day to be gaped at and thrown pennies in order to assuage the conscience of society;
- (3) Many of the larger 'charities' spend as much and sometimes more on administration and bureaucracy than they do on direct assistance, e.g. many of the pennies which were at one time or another collected for 'Black Babies' never left the orbit of a very much white and Irish office complex.

U.C.G. Republican Club.

- 113** We propose large investment into research and treatment by the State of two of our biggest social problems, mental illness and alcoholism. We also propose more emphasis on preventive medicine as in relation to this we propose the banning of advertisements dealing with cigarettes, alcohol and medicines.

Galway City Cumann.

- 114** This Ard Fheis recognising the appalling poverty that exists in this community pledges itself to an incessant campaign to raise the living standards of working people.

The current economic recession has not been solely responsible for the dramatic fall in living standards in the North, though it has undoubtedly been the prime factor in seeing a 100% increase in the unemployment queues within the last three years.

The cause of poverty is two-fold:

1. The unbelievably low wage levels of so many bread-winners, both men and women, which has one-third of our work-force taking home less than £25.00 per week. This deliberate policy of low wages has been tolerated for too long because of an abundance of labour.

We demand the introduction of a national minimum wage and its strict enforcement by the Department of Manpower.

We demand the introduction of publicly-owned industry as outlined by the Quigley Report and in particular the promotion of the concept of an All-Ireland Economic Development Board to utilise, in the full interest of Irish Workers, the benefits of development of our natural resources.

We pledge full support to the concept of Social Reconstruction in all areas of social and economic deprivation in the North and request the incoming Ard Comhairle to instruct all Councillors to actively promote this idea with a view to the establishment of ad hoc committ-

ees (on as broad a platform as possible) to seek implementation of local objectives.

2. The total inadequacy of present levels of Social Services Benefits to meet the cost of inflation, before one considers the grievous hardship caused by the Payment of Debt Act. For too many recipients of Social Security Benefits there is no prospect of ever 'earning' a living. They are condemned to a life-time routine of signing-on and collecting a giro. After a time they are not only unemployed but unemployable.

In particular, this Ard Fheis rejects the concept that the level of Widow's Benefit payable depends on the age of the widow at the time of the death of her husband. Given the present levels of unemployment, it is scandalous that women, many in mid life, be expected to obtain employment, possible for the first time in their adult life. We demand that Widow's Benefit be raised to a realistic flat-rate benefit with annual increments to meet cost of living increases. We demand immediately free of charge those benefits payable to those in receipt of Family Income Supplement/Supplementary Benefits.

Recognising the contribution to the community that pensioners have made this Ard Fheis rejects proposals to have their life-time savings subject to tax and further calls on the Government to raise Old Age Pensions to a level commensurate with earnings prior to retirement.

We demand that Family Income Supplement make up the full differential between actual earnings and what one would receive on the dole, not a fraction, as currently stands. This benefit would not be necessary if wage levels were above a national minimum. The raising of tax levels for those earning above £5,000 a year to make up lee-way mentioned above.

This Ard Fheis regrets the failure of both the 26 County Government and the British Government to impose a wealth tax on those individuals whose financial fortunes have been made on the labour of working people and pledges full support to Trade Union demands to have such legislation introduced in the immediate future.

The immediate nationalisation of all public service industries (electricity, gas, etc.) and their sources of finance — banks, to reduce the cost of these services to the consumer.

The four years of direct rule have seen a widening of the gap of costs of fuel, transport, power, food, between here and Britain while incomes have miserably failed to keep pace with spending power.

We utterly reject any concept that Supplementary Benefits be subject to tax and call on Trade Unions to mobilise public opinion against current manoeuvres in this direction.

Poverty must be tackled at source... industry must be provided. Private enterprise has miserably failed: the state must intervene.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

115 This Ard Fheis calls for:

1. Complete opposition to the so-called hospital "reorganisation" plans which in effect mean the removal from many areas of the local hospitals which are vital for community health services.
2. Continued pressure for the modernisation and improvement of facilities and services, particularly the expansion of the Health Centre building programme and the provision of health services in the community.
3. The creation of patients committees at health centres to enable patients to give their opinions on the services provided and increase local involvement in the Health Centres.
4. The creation of Community Health Councils representative of Trades Councils, tenants associations, councils and voluntary bodies which would comment on existing services in local areas and advise on their future development.
5. The provision of Health Centres in all working-class areas.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

16 That this Ard Fheis demand that the State provide legal and financial aid for facilities for battered wives.
Jemmy Hope Cumann, Dublin.

17 That there should be a means test for people to qualify for Children's Allowance, by this means people in the higher income bracket could be disallowed, this in turn could increase the allowance for the more needy.
Tralee, Co. Kerry.

DUBLIN

118 That this Ard Fheis recognises that the Dublin area is an area where one third of the population of the 26 Counties lives and that a high proportion of these people are young people.

This Ard Fheis also recognises that special measures are necessary to provide jobs, houses, transport and amenities for this growing population and that the redundancies arising from the present 'recession' have hit the Dublin area hardest and that it is now a "deprived area" Therefore, this Ard Fheis demands:

- (1) A comprehensive industrial programme incorporating State industry to provide jobs for the 45-50,000 people unemployed in this area. This programme should include the implementation of the Port and Docks Plan.
- (2) The provision of houses for the almost 7,000 people on the housing list; the thousands of others living in sub-standard accommodation and the many young people who will need houses in the next few years. Because of the critical shortage of houses in Dublin and the failure of the speculative builders to provide decent houses this can only be accomplished by (a) the declaration of a housing emergency and (b) the establishment of a state construction company.
- (3) That the living environment of working people be improved. Specifically that (a) inner city communities not be broken up and that those areas receive consideration when re-development is planned. (b) That the river Liffey be cleaned up as part of a wider campaign to provide basic amenities for working people. (c) That sufficient facilities be provided for the young people in Dublin as a matter of priority. In particular we reject the various 'solutions' to vandalism proposed by the 'community' councillors such as more repressive laws, more guards or the birch. The problem of vandalism can only be solved at its source by the provision of these facilities. (d) That sufficient education facilities be provided for this young population to end the present situation where a teacher is expected to teach 40/50 pupils in a dilapidated classroom.
- (4) That an efficient transport system be provided for the people of Dublin. This transport to be provided by the State and should be efficient and cheap to the user. In particular we demand the introduction of a 'Rapid Rail' system as proposed by Sinn Fein and by C.I.E. This Rail System would provide clean transport and would be less expensive than alternatives such as a motorway.

Such a system would alleviate the present chaos on Dublin streets. The coaches for such a system can, and should be built by C.I.E.'s Coach Building Section.

North Dublin Comhairle Ceanntair.

- 119 Accepting the projections of a massive increase in the population of the Dublin Area over the next decade and setting that fact against a background of major job losses over the last two years in the Port area and in the Glass and Fertiliser Industries in particular, this Ard Fheis calls for the immediate implementation of the Development Plan of the Dublin Port and Docks Board, in order to industrialise the Port area and create new employment.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin

- 120 That this Ard Fheis condemns the vested interests of property and capital who deprived the working class of Dublin City of badly needed jobs by sabotaging the attempt to construct an oil refinery in Dublin Bay and congratulates the leadership of the Party for its singular stand (among all parties of both right and left) in their defence of working class interests against the oil monopolies (i.e. 7 sisters and local lubricants) and in particular this Ard Fheis condemns the cowardly and subservient behaviour of the privately owned mass media who allowed their owners "Scenic View" to stand between the Irish people and the capacity to refine our own oil.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

- 121 That this Ard Fheis supports fully the Sinn Fein stand on the proposed Dublin Bay Oil Refinery and re-iterates the demand that a refinery independent of the multinational oil cartel be built in Ireland.

South Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 122 This Ard Fheis calls for the massive industrial expansion of Dublin Port and condemns the self seeking publicity hunters who whip up hysteria about pollution for their own political ends.

Ned Stapleton Cumann, Dublin.

- 123 Dublin's transport problems can be solved only by building an electric Rapid Rail System for passenger transport.

The best of the proposed Rapid Rail schemes – which Sinn Fein supports – would require only six miles of underground construction. Most of the track for such a system already exists, only an overground loop at Blanchardstown, and a link of overground track between Tallaght and Lucan needs to be built.

Sinn Fein believes that seventeen feet tunnels rather than twelve feet tunnels should be built. The larger size tunnel would enable freight to be transported by rail across the city from the docks to outside during the few hours when the rail system is not in use.

Very heavy lorries could then be banned from our city streets.

Joe O'Connor Cumann, Dublin.

C.I.E.

- 124 This Ard Fheis calls on the Executive of C.I.E. to halt the closure of rail branch lines and strongly condemn the attempts to close the Rosslare-Waterford-Limerick Junction line. We call for the greater development of railways as a transport system to relieve congestion on the roads and to ease the burden of the huge amounts of capital going towards road development and construction.

We further view the railways as a valuable asset for future industrial development and their existence as incentives to attract new industry. This Ard Fheis further calls for the dismissal of the Chairman of C.I.E. and those on the board who represent the interests of private enterprise, as C.I.E. is in competition with private enterprise as a National Transport Body.

Slieverua Cumann, Co. Kilkenny.

- 25 This Ard Fheis is totally opposed to the Coalition's attempt to run down CIE and in particular its threat against the free school transport system.

Larkin Cumann, Ballyfermot.

- 26 That this Ard Fheis condemns the proposed closure of the Ross Lane Waterford-Limerick line and calls for the end of the policy of running down the national rail system.

Waterford City Cumann.

- 27 That this Ard Fheis demands the removal of Liam St. John Devlin, chairman of C.I.E. and an enquiry to be carried out into the directorships held by members of the board of C.I.E. and other state and semi-state bodies to determine what vested interests they hold in the private sector.

Cumann MacSwiney/MacCurtain,
North-East Ward, Cork City.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 28 This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein pledges its continuing support to the just cause of the Palestinian peoples in their struggle for independence and homeland. Sinn Fein recognises the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (P.L.O.) as the true representative of the Palestinian peoples and will maintain and strengthen fraternal ties already established with that organisation.

Ard Comhairle.

- 29 Noting the progress of the revolutionary movement in Angola, particularly in the task of rebuilding their country, we further note the continued existence of apartheid in racial South Africa and call upon the United Nations and especially the Government of the Irish Free State, to enforce sanctions to bring down this regime. We condemn the farcical independence of the Transkei as a sinister tactic by the South African government, and demand immediate disinvestment and the withdrawal of vital financial assistance by the banks. We condemn the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa and note the failure of its Bantustan policies.

We condemn the policy of repression in South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe and support the forces of liberation in these countries in their struggle for freedom and justice.

Fintan Lalor Rep. Club.
Queen's University, Belfast.

- 130 This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein condemns the Military Coup in Thailand of October 6 and the bloody massacres of students which accompanied it. We support the Thai people in their struggle for democracy against the military dictators and their U.S. backers.

In particular we condemn the violation of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights by the Thai Dictatorship and the denial of freedom of speech and expression.

We ask the Government in Dublin to instruct its U.N. representative to demand the unseating of the representative of the present Thai dictatorship as unqualified to maintain legitimate membership of the U.N. in order to make way for a representative of the struggling Thai peoples.

Ard Comhairle.

- 131 This Ard Fheis of Sinn Fein salutes with acclaim the growing pace of the liberation struggles going on in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

In accordance with United Nations resolutions and in line with our own declared policy of support for the national liberation struggles of these countries over the years we pledge all the solidarity and support we can muster in the battle against racism, colonialism and for sovereignty, independence, socialism and democracy in these countries.

Ard Comhairle.

- 132 That Sinn Fein, while continuing to foster and develop links with progressive political groupings and liberation movements throughout the world, also encourage, wherever possible, links between the Irish Trade Union Movement and the organised working class throughout the world.

Connolly Cumann. East Cork.

- 133 Recognising the danger of the current tendency of the Irish government to become more closely involved with other EEC countries in the development of a common defence policy and even membership of NATO, this Ard Fheis reaffirms Sinn Fein's belief that Ireland's best interests are served by continued neutrality and re-alignment with Third World countries. This Ard Fheis commends all efforts for World Peace and especially those of the World Peace Council through the Stockholm Appeal.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin.

- 134 That while Sinn Fein recognises that we must support the socialist countries of the world, and look to them for support, the present policy of seemingly uncritical support for the U.S.S.R. and the countries of the Eastern bloc does not reflect the views of the majority of the membership of Sinn Fein and should be replaced by a policy of more realistic support giving both praise and criticism whenever due.

Cumann, Dundalk.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 135 That as a pre-requisite to full membership of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, all members where eligible must be members of the trade union movement or trade associations.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

- 136 That all employed members play an active role in the Trade Union Movement and that this be a condition of membership of Sinn Fein.

South Down/South Armagh
Comhairle Ceannair.

- 137 This Ard Fheis welcomes the positive advances which have been made in the fight against sectarianism in N. Ireland, particularly the new generation of Trade Councils which have sprung up in major urban centres in the North as a direct result of the I.C.T.U.'s "Better Life for All" campaign.

These new Trade Councils offer the basis for:

- (a) Local rallying points for working class opinion in the face of sectarian violence;
- (b) Working class forums essential in countering the unemployment, housing and poverty crisis in N. Ireland.
- (c) An expansion of democracy and a general raising of working class awareness and unity in N. Ireland.

This Ard Fheis re-affirms its support for the I.C.T.U. "Better Life For All" campaign and for the Republican Clubs Anti-Sectarian Campaign as spelt out in detail in the Democratic Manifesto in last year's Ard Fheis.

Against a background in which monopoly capital is organising itself on an integrated 32 County framework new working class alliances are needed to meet this challenge. The defeat of sectarianism is accordingly an essential objective in the path to working class solidarity and unity in Ireland.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 138 That men be eligible to fully participate on all Womens' Committees including the National Womens' Committee.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

- 139 That this Ard Fheis instructs the incoming National Womens' Committee to initiate a campaign to procure unemployment assistance to bring female school leavers and other unemployed female workers into line with their male counterparts.

Cumann MacSwiney/MacCurtain,
North-East Ward, Cork City.

- 140 This Ard Fheis instructs the incoming Ard Comhairle to ensure that creche facilities are provided at all future Ard Fheiseanna.

Limerick City Cumann.

- 141 That this Ard Fheis consents to a programme of agitation for State sponsored creches for working parents during working hours and that the Movement recognises its responsibility to its members with children and instructs Club and Cumainn to organise creches for Movement meeting times.

Henry Joy McCracken Rep. Club.

- 142 That this Ard Fheis recommends that Clubs and Cumainn should encourage Community and Tenants Groups to establish Community Babysitting Services.

Henry Joy McCracken Rep. Club.

- 143 That this Ard Fheis notes that:

1. The delivery of education lectures and material, though under the guidance and authorisation of the Director of Education, relies on the individual cumann or club education officer.
2. That some cumann have yet to appoint education officers or have not received educational lectures for some time,

3. That this situation develops because the quality and regularity of education depends solely upon individual education officers.

Therefore this Ard Fheis calls on the Director of Education to appoint where necessary a committee of education officers or individuals to operate under the c.c. to ensure that education is given in each cumann or club. That this committee would be responsible for giving lectures in those cumann who have no education officers or have failed to ensure regular education lectures.

Pearse Cumann, Dublin.

- ✓ 144 That this Ard Fheis empowers the incoming Ard Comhairle to examine the role, function and composition of Cumainn, constituency committees and Comhairle Ceanntair within any given area and to establish more efficient structures in line with the needs of the party in these areas if required.

South Dublin Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 145 That this Ard Fheis instruct all comhairli ceanntair to take immediate steps to reorganise cumainn and clubs on a constituency basis where possible.

Russell Cumann, Dublin.

- 146 That this Ard Fheis instructs the education department to provide full training facilities for candidates and all party members in the roles they will have to play in forthcoming elections.

Cork City Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 147 That the incoming Ard Comhairle should take steps to see that where Regional Secretariat exist, it should be working for the whole area and visit the Cumainn in its jurisdiction at least quarterly

Tralee, Co. Kerry.

- 148 That the Starry Plough on a red background (as the design used on the lapel badges for this year's national collection) be adopted as our national symbol and made the basis of our flag.

Fintan Lalor Rep. Club.

Queen's University Belfast.

- 149 That the Movement develop the Starry Plough by changing the background to red.

Louth Comhairle Ceanntar

- 150 That all clubs and cumann engage in a programme of public meetings, (indoor and outdoor) to make the general public more aware of our policies.

Divis Towers, Belfast

- ✓ 151 We call on this Ard Fheis to establish a National Committee to:

1. Discuss and suggest ways to implement a definite socialist cultural policy.
2. To carry out a re-appraisal of our role in Connradh na Gaeilge and other Gaelic organisations and of the general failure to further the Gaelic cause.

Belfast Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 152 Whilst the Movement believes the revival of Irish language is essential, we feel little is being done on this issue. We call on all C.C. areas to provide Irish classes where possible and to set up pressure groups in each area to agitate for the teaching of the Irish language in all schools,

primary and secondary.

Terence Perry/Liam McMillen,
Rep. Clubs, Lower Falls.

- 153 In view of the difficulties experienced in trying to implement last year's Ard Fheis resolution on Irish, we propose that a national committee be established to hammer out and suggest ways to implement our policy on this matter as part of a socialist culture policy.

Fintan Lalor Rep. Club.
Queen's University, Belfast.

- 154 That this Ard Fheis would encourage the reduction of commemorative ceremonies being held by the Movement.

Limerick City Cumann.

- 155 That the Irish Democratic Youth Movement engage in national efforts to reach other youth groups in debate on Socialist education and Socialist topics and so further the goal of a Democratic Socialist Republic. Groups like Macra na Feirme and school groups would be appropriate groups. This would help Sinn Fein in their work in rural Ireland.

Co. Monaghan, Comhairle Ceanntar.

- 156 This Ard Fheis instructs local Comhairle Ceanntair and Cumainn to give every encouragement and guidance to the Irish Democratic Youth Movement in their respective areas.

Martin O'Leary Cumann, Dublin.

- 157 That this Ard Fheis instructs cumainn and clubs to become aware of local problems, such as traffic dangers to children, and, as a priority, to press for the provision of Traffic Education Units to educate children in road safety, under the control of local authorities in every area, particularly urban.

Cumann MacSwiney/MacCurtain,
North-East Ward. Cork City.

- 158 We propose that this Ard Fheis drops the names of patriots from the organisation.

Wolfe Tone Rep. Club. Belfast.

- 159 Go meadófaí na teorannai tuarastal, (le iasacht teaghlachais a shalathor o na Rialtaisí Aitiula) ceim ar ceim le balgadhpadh

Cumann Dick McKee, Finglas